

their own party have been very open about wanting to target Social Security and Medicare, RICK SCOTT being among them, and he was the leader of the National Republican Senate Campaign Committee.

But listen to this one. If you think this is just a few people, a few dangerous people, doing this, dangerous on Social Security and Medicare, that is, the Republican Study Committee, which includes a majority—a majority—of House Republicans, at least half—this is not some fringe group but half of the entire House conference—released a budget last year that proposed raising Social Security retirement age, cutting benefits to certain recipients, and even privatizing some parts of Social Security.

Let me say that again because this—I don't know if it has been reported, but it is astounding. The Republican Study Committee, including a majority of House Republicans, released a budget just last year that proposed raising the Social Security retirement age, cutting benefits to certain recipients, and even privatizing some parts of Social Security.

And almost as if to prove President Biden correct, Senator JOHNSON of Wisconsin reacted to the State of the Union by going on the radio and calling for annual votes on Social Security, calling it a Ponzi scheme.

Let me say that one again too. According to Wisconsin Public Radio, Senator JOHNSON, last week, openly called Social Security a Ponzi scheme before bemoaning the failed attempt to privatize the program during the Bush administration.

A, it is an incredible example of how out of touch MAGA Republicans are from average Americans, and, B, it shows that this idea that Republicans don't want to cut Social Security is not at all clear, no matter what Speaker McCARTHY says. There are too many in his ranks who either are calling for it now or have called for it in the recent past. We Democrats are not going to stop fighting until this plan, bubbling up in Republican quarters even now, to cut Social Security, to cut Medicare is dead—D-E-A-D.

So it brings us back to the \$64,000 question: Are Republicans going to target Social Security and Medicare?

Until Republicans actually show us their plan, we simply can't take them at their word that Social Security and Medicare won't be touched because the record over the last few years clearly shows that many of them are open to doing just that, cutting it.

#### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Madam President, now, on judges, this week, the Senate will reach a significant milestone by confirming the 99th and 100th Federal judge of the Biden administration.

We will begin today with Cindy Chung, nominee No. 99, to serve as a circuit court judge for the Third Circuit. If confirmed, Ms. Chung would be the first Asian-American judge to ever,

ever sit on the Third Circuit. That should make us all proud.

And Cindy Chung is precisely the kind of person we want on the Federal bench. She has dedicated her career to protecting civil rights, having prosecuted White supremacists and others charged with hate crimes.

Later today, we will also vote to proceed with Gina Mendez-Miro as district judge in the District of Puerto Rico.

Judge Mendez-Miro would make history as the first LGBT American to preside in the Puerto Rico District Court.

And very quickly I want to mention last week's vote on DeAndrea Benjamin, only the second woman of color ever to serve on the Fourth Circuit. I had to miss her vote, unfortunately, because of the birth of my grandson, but if I were here, I would have proudly voted to confirm her.

The nominations of DeAndrea Benjamin and Cindy Chung are significant for many reasons. For one, the lion's share of all Federal cases are ultimately decided at the circuit court level so filling these vacancies with judges like Ms. Benjamin and Ms. Chung are essential.

Second, despite their importance, circuit courts have traditionally lagged well behind other courts in terms of diversity. We want these courts, so vital, so powerful, to represent America—all of America, not just some of it.

Ms. Benjamin and Ms. Chung will help remedy that with their unique experiences and much needed perspectives on the law.

Senate Democrats have focused intensely on expanding the diversity of our courts, and not just in terms of demographics but in terms of experience, professional experience, too. We are working hard not only to add more women, more people of color, more lawyers from unique backgrounds to the bench but people of different walks of life.

Ketanji Brown Jackson is the first Legal Aid attorney to serve on the Supreme Court. After all these years, that perspective had not been on the Court, and now it is.

So why do we want these kinds of diversity? It is simple. When Americans present their cases before these courts, they should trust that they will get a fair shake in the dispensation of justice.

The more our courts reflect the country at large in terms of backgrounds and experiences, the greater that trust will be in the long run.

Ms. Benjamin, Ms. Chung, and Ms. Mendez-Miro are all examples of the kinds of judges who will strengthen that trust.

I congratulate each of them on their nominations.

I thank Chairman DURBIN and the great members of the Judiciary Committee for moving these individuals quickly through the nominations process.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

#### UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, before I get into the topic of my speech today, I just put a tweet out about what I think about the surveillance balloons, which are very, very concerning, being on the Armed Services Committee.

You know, the Chinese surveillance over our skies is very concerning but also the fentanyl from China pouring across our borders every day that is killing 300 Americans a day, that is also very concerning and also the 800-percent increase in Chinese nationals crossing our border every day.

So I think we have got a lot of problems other than just balloons flying around our sky. We need to recognize that. We need to start understanding we have an adversary in China that is our biggest, and the President of the United States—he obviously needs to protect our air, but he needs to protect our borders. We are having people die every day.

What is the most important? The most important thing is protecting the sovereignty of our country, and that is our borders and the sky and protecting our people on the ground, especially from this deadly drug.

So I just wanted to say that before I get into my speech because I know it is important. China is our No. 1 adversary, and we need to start watching every part of it and still watch these balloons fly around the sky that we have no clue of what they are doing or why they are here.

#### ABORTION

Madam President, my Democratic colleagues frequently say conservatives are radical in order to score political points. Even President Biden has used his office to attack conservatives with language I won't give more air time by repeating here at this time.

Liberals do this to scare Americans into ignoring the failures of their own policies and to distract voters from how extreme they have become.

This was on full display in last week's State of the Union Address, as President Biden misled the country about Republican ideas and straight up twisted the facts of his own agenda.

President Biden sold the state of the Nation as perfectly fine, ignoring many of the issues Americans care most about. The reality is, President Biden and my colleagues on the far left are sometimes way, way out of touch with what the American people believe in.

Democrats frequently reject commonsense proposals but support extreme policies put forth by the far, far leftwing of their party. Liberal representatives have to do this because they are aligned with a woke mob that will cancel them if they disagree. Although that far-left mob is very vocal, they don't represent the vast majority of Americans. Sadly, President Biden's position on the border, the economy,

crime, and energy have all fallen victim to this trap set by the progressive ideas of the left, and his administration is set on taking this country apart from the inside out. We are dying from the inside out, using far-left, even socialist ideas that have not and will not—will not—ever work in the United States of America.

Democrats are misusing the Federal Government to get their way regardless of what the law, the Constitution, or the American people have to say. No issue shows the radical drift of this administration better than abortion—a very tough and a very important topic.

The far left attacks pro-life Americans, and they distract from the fact that their views go well beyond the beliefs of most Americans and most civilized people around the world. The Biden administration courts an extreme, heartless, and inhumane abortion agenda. Democrats today believe in abortion at any time for any reason with no restrictions or regard for human life.

I am proud to be pro-life for many reasons, including my faith—another thing I will not set aside for political correctness. However, even without considering religion, a society that allows abortion up to and past the moment of birth—after the baby has been born—isn't progressive; it is barbaric, and it is murder.

When the Supreme Court ruled that abortions should be left up to the people, this administration went into overdrive to force their agenda onto every American. Now, to be clear, the Supreme Court ruling did not make abortion illegal. They said: We are going to send it back to the States where it can be more closely decided by the voters. Let the voters decide. That is how we do it in the United States of America, because it is an issue that should not be left up to the Federal Government or to a court. The people should decide. That is what we should do here. That is what we have always done.

The Biden administration is attempting to use, at this time now, our military, our veterans affairs facilities, your taxpayer dollars, maybe even a ridiculous new public health emergency in the very near future to go at this agenda—all to make sure there is unrestricted access to ending the life of an unborn child. That is extreme.

Let's look at how this administration is trying to skirt the law and ignore the Supreme Court and how it will impose the law. Last summer, the Department of Defense claimed that the decision to overturn Roe would have serious impacts on our military readiness—extreme impacts. Of course, they provided no real evidence to back up this claim. But, as usual, they laid out a radical plan to use our military resources to fly folks around the country to get abortions on taxpayer money. American taxpayers are expected to pay for time off, support, and travel costs for servicemembers and their dependents.

For years, the military has funded abortions in three different cases: rape, incest, and a threat to the life of the mother. The new policy that the Department of Defense wants to put forward throws all those restrictions out the door, and opens military facilitated abortion services to millions and millions more people.

It is ridiculous; it is against the law. And they know it. That is why they refused to answer questions asked by Members of Congress when we doubted these plans. The Department of Defense stonewalled—stonewalled—all of our requests for a briefing for months this past fall, only giving us answers after I held up their nominations to force their hands. They were forced to do it.

Those answers were shocking once we had the briefing. The Department of Defense leaders claimed overturning Roe would severely impact military readiness. But the Department has averaged less than 20 abortions per year for many, many years—averaged only 20.

So does this potentially restricting less than 20 procedures a year sound like a threat to our military readiness? It does not. This isn't about readiness. It is about politics.

The new policy would put the American people on the hook to pay for thousands and thousands of abortion trips every year with no clear restrictions. Of course, they have no idea how much it is going to cost the American taxpayer.

The Department of Defense isn't the only department seeking to expand abortion access. Last year, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced a similar policy. Like the Department of Defense, the VA is attempting to circumvent the Supreme Court decision. The VA began performing abortions at taxpayer-funded medical facilities across the country due to the so-called "crisis" created by commonsense restrictions. This includes States like my home State of Alabama, where, by the way, abortion is illegal.

Never mind that the Federal law prohibits the use of VA facilities for abortions. Never mind that. Never mind that the Supreme Court ruled that States can pass their own laws to regulate the issue. That is what the Supreme Court says. Never mind that the VA provided no protections for staff who may have religious objections to performing these procedures. And never mind the cost to taxpayers, the impact on veterans, and the will of the American people. Never mind all that.

The VA providing abortions is against the law—absolutely against the law. It is an unconstitutional abuse of the government, and it should not be tolerated. Last week, more than half of the Republican conference in the Senate and dozens of lawmakers in the House joined me in introducing a resolution disapproving of the VA rule allowing abortion on demand. Our resolution defends the law, the unborn, and

our veterans who depend on the VA for their healthcare. Soon we will force a vote on this resolution, because the American people deserve to know where each Senator in this room stands on the law and protecting life or with abortion at any time. The people need to know that and where everybody stands.

This extreme abortion madness does not appear to be stopping with the military and the VA. The Biden Department of Health and Human Services is reportedly considering declaring a public health emergency on abortion. It is an emergency. The idea would be laughable if it wasn't so seriously wrong for our country. Of course, this is just another power grab. The public health emergency frees up extra money and gives the Federal Government more control. Why else would they do it?

It is just like the sham of the COVID declaration we are still living under somehow. We still have the declaration of emergency. There is no emergency because Roe v. Wade was overturned. Democrats just think that giving Americans the power to self-govern is some kind of crisis.

President Biden seems set on forcing taxpayers to fund an abortion agenda that is completely out of step with the American people. Only 19 percent of Americans support late-term abortion, and a majority support a 15-week ban. But you probably haven't heard that, because pro-life Americans are often silenced.

No more. We will not be silent. We believe every American, including the unborn has a right to life. We believe in the authority of the Supreme Court who made the issue very clear last year: Let the States decide what each voter wants.

We believe our military and VA should be focused on national defense and veterans, not politics. And we believe in a government that works within the law. Using our military and fake emergencies to make sure there are no limits on abortion is absolutely, positively shameful. I will never bow to the mob saying otherwise. It is embarrassing to our country, and I encourage all Americans who believe in the value of human life to stand up and join me.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Minnesota.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF DAVID FERDINAND DURENBERGER

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 57, submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 57) honoring the life of David Ferdinand Durenberger, former Senator for the State of Minnesota.